

## **Faith Based Campaign**

### **In-Faith OBSERVANCES**

In-faith observances can be tailored to fit a particular congregation's interests, needs, and resources. Some of these ideas may be useful to your church, synagogue, temple or mosque in building or strengthening a community of faith in which children and families know that help is available when they need it.

#### **Celebrate or Initiate Services for Families**

In-faith observances can provide an opportunity to celebrate existing programs or establish new ones to support families within the congregation or the community as a whole. These efforts may be undertaken by an organization within the congregation (for example, an adult class), the congregation as a whole, or multiple congregations across the community.

- Launch emergency relief services
- Renovate unsafe housing

Parents who must constantly struggle to meet families' basic needs may be too overwhelmed to provide proper care. Even if parents are coping as well as they can under such circumstances, they may lack the resources to provide adequate shelter and nutrition.

- Organize volunteers to provide emergency child care
- Host or support a Family Activity Center to include activities such as playgroups, Parents' Night Out program, financial education opportunities, and more
- Join with other congregations to make such services easily available to the whole community

The most common reason for referral to Child Protective Services is a child's being left alone. Knowing that child care is easily available when an emergency occurs or simply when one needs a break is one of the most powerful elements of social support for parents.

- Provide Family Friends, who are volunteer helpers or partners, to parents of young children
- Create parent networks or family clusters
- Through school partnerships, facilitate parents' interaction with each other and their engagement and leadership in the community
- Encourage young adults to assume important roles in service to the congregation and the community as a whole

Mutual assistance is important in sustaining social support and alleviating worries about care of children. Having someone to call when a baby won't stop crying may be an important step in prevention of maltreatment. The development of parent leadership and civic engagement helps to strengthen family life and to support children's successful development.

- Establish a task force to develop and implement other strategies for child protection and family support



Such planning could be a direct outgrowth of adult religious school discussions or at a family-night supper.

### **Have Special Observances in a Worship Service**

- Build the entire worship service around themes of building community, supporting families, and caring for children
- In adult classes, discuss the myths and facts about keeping children safe (you might invite a STRONG COMMUNITIES staff member or volunteer to lead the discussion)
- Ask members of the congregation to bring items to replenish the supplies of a community organization serving children and families
- During the worship service, include a brief presentation about CAP Month, the reasons for it, and the possible role of the faith-based community
- Honor members who are leaders in support for families in the congregation and the community
- Sign pledges to watch out for families of young children
- Wear Pinwheels for Prevention stickers and pins to signify such commitments
- Include inserts in the bulletin or newsletter that explains and describes opportunities for volunteer service

*(For additional ideas contact your MI Children's Trust Fund Local Council,  
[www.michigan.gov/ctf](http://www.michigan.gov/ctf) )*

## **Examples of In-Faith Observances**

### **Children's Defense Fund Children's Sabbath Campaign:**

<http://www.childrendefense.org/child-advocacy-resources-center/faith-based-programs/national-observance-of-childrens-sabbaths-celebration/>

The above website contains multi-faith resources and information about the National Observance of Children's Sabbaths Celebration (Children's Defense Fund). Although there is an event which takes place traditionally in October, Children's Sabbaths may be celebrated throughout the year, including during CAP Month (April).

### **Blue Sunday:**

#### **For help in implementing these ideas, finding resources, or linking**

Blue Sunday is a national child abuse prevention initiative whose mission is to inspire others to create their own child abuse prevention efforts. More information can be found at [www.bluesunday.org](http://www.bluesunday.org). If everyone did a little we would see BIG results for children. National Blue Sunday is April 28, 2013. Encourage local faith communities to join other faith communities across the nation as they take the time in their morning service to pray for the victims of child abuse. Note: Blue Sunday may be another day of the week depending upon when a religion's Sabbath is practiced.

It's that simple. There's nothing to join and no fees to participate. Your organization can take the lead in making a difference in child abuse prevention efforts.



The following are some suggestions for launching Blue Sunday initiatives in your community. Perhaps partners in your community will have some of their own ideas on how to get faith communities involved.

- Find out if there is an interfaith council in your community. Contact the leader and ask if you can make a presentation about Blue Sunday at one of their meetings. Ask for a list of council members and contact information.
- Multiple local councils incorporate Marian Wright Edelman's "Prayer for Children" into Blue Sunday or Blue Sabbath events.
- Send local churches, temples, synagogues, etc. a letter (sample enclosed) to familiarize them with the Blue Sunday concept.
- Follow-up by contacting the leaders of local churches, temples, synagogues, etc. and request their participation.
- Houses of worship often will have social committee groups who will take this on as a project. They will need time to organize it.
- Display pinwheels near the house of worship's door.
- Prepare a packet for each place of worship with the Blue Sunday Prayer and other sample literature. "Lord/God/Allah, thank You for our children. For them we pray. Help us teach them of Your kindness. Of Your mercy and Your way. Help us show them of Your love. Your strength and safety too. Help us show them who You are. Help us treat them like You do."
- Work with local faith communities to host a Blue Sunday (Sabbath) event where you give the Blue Sunday/Sabbath Challenge: Let's pray, educate ourselves, and volunteer for the children of our nation until black and blue are just colors in their crayon box.
- Conduct a candlelight vigil to commemorate Blue Sunday/Sabbath.
- Host a press conference to share national, state and local statistics and the history of Blue Sunday/Sabbath.



Note: For those not of the Christian faith whose Sabbath may occur on another day of the week, e.g. Muslims on Fridays, Jews on Saturdays, etc., this Blue Sunday letter can be modified accordingly

### *Sample Letter*

Dear Faith Community Leader,

Child abuse is a major problem in our state and in our nation. Three children a day die from abuse; 44% of them are infants, under the age of one. April is Child Abuse Prevention Month and April 28, 2013 is National Blue Sunday. All across Michigan efforts are being made to raise awareness about the impact of child abuse and neglect and to elicit the participation of community members. Blue Sunday is one initiative to inspire others to create their own prevention efforts. We know if everyone did a little we would see BIG results for children.

Join faith communities across the nation as they take the time in their morning service to pray for the victims of child abuse. It's that simple. There's nothing to join and no fees to participate. All we ask is that you register so that we can monitor the growth of this campaign and its effectiveness. **Register your involvement on the Blue Sunday website ([www.bluesunday.org](http://www.bluesunday.org)).** Your organization can take the lead in making a difference in protecting children.

Some suggested activities for Blue Sunday include the following:

- ❖ Address this issue in your weekly service and/or weekly bulletin.
- ❖ Tie blue ribbons on trees in your place of worship's yard and/or place large blue bows with blue streamers on entry doors. Plant a pinwheel garden on the house of worship's lawn or create pinwheel bouquets to display in the lobby and/or sanctuary.
- ❖ Pray for victims and those who care for them on Blue Sunday (April 28<sup>th</sup>) or each Sunday in April (see Blue Sunday Prayer).
- ❖ Set up a table with information about child abuse and available local services.
- ❖ Distribute blue pinwheel lapel pins for people to wear during April.
- ❖ Ring church bells three times (the number of children who die each day) at 1:00 p.m.
- ❖ Get local statistics on child abuse victims by contacting your local Child Abuse and Neglect Council. Visit [www.michigan.gov/ctf](http://www.michigan.gov/ctf) for a complete list of councils.
- ❖ Get handouts and reproducible literature from the Children's Trust Fund of Michigan at 1-800-CHILDREN or visit [www.michigan.gov/ctf](http://www.michigan.gov/ctf).

**On behalf of Michigan's children and families, we thank you for your time and consideration.**

# Blue Sunday

## **Blue Sunday Prayer\***

Lord, thank you for our children  
For them we kneel and pray.

Help us teach them of your kindness  
Of your mercy and your way.

Help us show them of your love,  
Your strength and safety, too.

Help us show them who you are.  
Help us treat them like you do.

## National Blue Sunday is April 28, 2013

Blue Sunday is a national child abuse prevention initiative whose mission is to inspire others to create their own child abuse prevention efforts. If everyone did a little we would see BIG results for children.

Join churches across the nation as they take the time in their morning service to pray for the victims of child abuse and those that rescue them. It's that simple. There's nothing to join and no fees to participate. All we ask is that you register so that we can monitor the growth of this campaign and its effectiveness. Your organization can take the lead in making a difference in child abuse prevention efforts. Please register at [www.bluesunday.org](http://www.bluesunday.org).

\*Taken from the official Blue Sunday website at <http://www.bluesunday.org/>